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SUBJECT: CRICKET WORLD CUP 2007: URGENCY REQUIRED, BUT
INTERNATIONAL CRICKET COUNCIL NOT WORRIED (YET)

REF: KINGSTON 00198

This message is sensitive but unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Seeking to assess the state of Jamaica's preparations to host the opening ceremony and some competitive matches for the 2007 International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup, Ambassador and Econoff met separately with three top organizing officials: Chris Dehring, Managing Director and CEO of Cricket World Cup, Incorporated (CWC); Chris Tetley (strictly protect), the International Cricket Council's (ICC) liaison to the CWC, which is managing the Cricket World Cup, to be held in nine CARICOM nations around the Caribbean in March-April 2007; and Robert Bryan, Chairman and CEO of Jamaica's Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for the event. Tetley explained the organizational structure of the event, and disputed the notion that the ICC was displeased with the level of progress made, given that the Opening Ceremony (which is to be held in Jamaica on March 11, 2007) is just over one year away. He also addressed problems of geographical complexity, infrastructure, security, and urgency that various stakeholders have raised in conversations with emboffs. End summary.

Background

¶2. (U) The nations of the West Indies will host the 2007 International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup, to be held from March 11 to April 28. Although cricket's profile in the U.S. is a limited one beyond some immigrant communities, the sport is the most popular in Jamaica, and is widely considered to be one of the most important "unifiers" among the disparate and far-flung English-speaking CARICOM states. In hosting the 2007 Cricket World Cup, Jamaica joins Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Given the participation in the tournament of national teams representing the West Indies (which famously fields a regional, rather than a national team), England, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, South Africa, Australia and other nations, and visiting contingents of fans from participating countries, the event will focus international attention on Jamaica and the region early in 2007.

¶3. (SBU) The International Cricket Council (ICC) is the governing body for cricket, responsible for promoting the game worldwide. It is the ICC that is the "owner" of the 2007 Cricket World Cup. However, in keeping with the organizational structure of the 2003 World Cup that was held in South Africa, the ICC contracted the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) to run the actual event. The WICB, in turn, established Cricket World Cup, Incorporated (CWC) as the

management company. At the same time, each of the participating governments set up a Local Organizing Committee (LOC), and these agencies contract with CWC to coordinate the matches and activities in their specific countries.

¶4. (SBU) The event represents a massive organizational, logistical and infrastructural undertaking which, if well executed, presents an opportunity for Jamaica to burnish its image to potential tourists and investors. The potential downside, of course, is that a poorly organized event would embarrass the GOJ and could scare away tourists and investors. Just over a year before the event begins, the GOJ faces considerable challenges in preparing for the event thanks to resource constraints, poor infrastructure and a high rate of violent crime. The Ambassador and Econoff met recently and separately with three senior officials organizing the event to sound them out about the state of Jamaica's preparations: Chris Dehring, Managing Director and CEO of Cricket World Cup, Incorporated (CWC); Chris Tetley (strictly protect), the International Cricket Council's (ICC) liaison to the CWC, which is managing the Cricket World Cup, to be held in nine nations around the Caribbean; and Robert Bryan, Chairman and CEO of Jamaica's Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for the event.

Geography

¶5. (U) The unifying theme of the difficulties of hosting this event is geography. In a December meeting with the Ambassador, Chris Dehring, the Managing Director and CEO of CWC, related an anecdote about the 2002 Soccer World Cup which was hosted jointly by Japan and South Korea. After that event, said Dehring, soccer's international governing

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body, FIFA, announced that it would no longer hold the quadrennial competition across national boundaries, due to the logistical hurdles that organizers had to surmount. "Now multiply that by nine," said Dehring, referring to the CARICOM host nations.

¶6. (SBU) Chris Tetley, the ICC's liaison to the CWC, told Econoff that it is rumored within the ICC that this would be the last time such a contracting arrangement would be set up to run a World Cup. He noted that there is an inherent tension in having the Cup being the "property" of the ICC, while at the same time distancing itself from the day-to-day operations by using a contractor. His role is to walk the tightrope between assisting and advising CWC, while at the same time monitoring and reporting back to the ICC on the progress being made. What structure future Cup events might take, however, he was unable to specify.

¶7. (SBU) Tetley was categorical that suggestions that the ICC was displeased with the progress being made for the 2007 event were not/true. He noted that any undertaking of this magnitude, with just over a year remaining until the Opening Ceremony, will have areas which are behind schedule, and about which concerns will grow. "I cannot conceive," he stated, "of a scenario regarding 'operational deliverables' under which we would consider moving the World Cup" to an entirely different venue. In this case, the back-up country is South Africa. The worst case that he envisions would involve a limited number of venues, owing (most likely) to a natural disaster such as a hurricane. Nonetheless, Tetley was candid about some of the hardships that remain.

¶8. (SBU) While many stakeholders had hoped that the World Cup could be a catalyst for changes that would dovetail with the needs of the newly emerging Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME, see reftel), it appears that it is too late to codify the necessary legislation. Visas illustrate this point clearly. Originally, organizers had hoped to have a Smart Card issued to fans at their first port of entry, containing biographic and biometric data which could be used

to track their movements during the competition. While this card would expire after 60 days, and the legislation would "sunset", many privately hoped that it could be a test run for a wider system for CARICOM citizens, with the possibility of extending the legislation indefinitely. The cost of this technology, according to Derek Jones) the Senior Legal Counsel for CWC, with responsibility for developing draft legislation) was prohibitive. Jones said that a "low-technology" solution, with cards that had only biographic data, and no tracking capability, was likely. His team was looking now towards regulations rather than legislation. "There is simply not enough time," he said.

Infrastructure

¶9. (SBU) While concerns have been raised about the lack of accommodation for the potentially massive influx of fans wanting to see matches, Tetley believes the issue is overblown. Press reports have placed the potential number of visitors to the region at 80-100,000. The 2003 Cricket World Cup in South Africa received 20,000, Tetley said. (Note: Tetley worked in the same capacity at the 2003 event. End note.) Even accounting for the relative ease of travel to the Caribbean for cricket fans, he expressed his opinion that 30-40,000 was more likely.

¶10. (SBU) This is not to suggest that there are no obstacles, however. Both to the press and to embassies, Dehring has raised the case of Guyana, where the CWC contingent (e.g., organizers, VIPs, sponsors, etc.) will require approximately 500 rooms, with only 200 available. Tetley concurred that Guyana faces a challenge in this regard, but also noted that the LOC there had been working closely with the Government and the CWC to add urgency to addressing this problem. Econoff asked Tetley and Dehring about the oft-mentioned possibility that cruise ships might be used at some venues as "floating hotels," but both stated that they had not heard of any definitive plans. While not ruling out the possibility of private entrepreneurs exploring this option, Tetley wondered if it was not already too late for such a venture. Tellingly, both Dehring and Tetley made reference to the fact that accommodation was not, strictly speaking, within their purview.

¶11. (SBU) With regard to stadiums being constructed or upgraded in the region, Tetley expressed concerns about the actual playing surfaces, rather than the infrastructure. Temporary stands, he noted, can be erected at very short

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notice if construction has not progressed quickly enough. An unplayable "wicket") the surface upon which the batsmen stand) is another matter entirely. Tetley again raised Guyana as an example, as they have recently dug up their wicket for replanting, which might not leave enough time for grass to grow in properly. Don Lockerbie, a venue and operations planner for CWC, stated separately to Econoff that "miracles are required every day," and that they might have to "pull it off with smoke and mirrors," a reference to the possible need for temporary stands for fans. (Note: Lockerbie, a U.S. citizen, has extensive experience in the field, having worked on the 1994 FIFA World Cup and on stadium planning for the Atlanta 1996 Olympic Games. End note.)

Security

¶12. (SBU) It is important to draw a distinction between event security and national security. According to Dehring, there is a draft "master plan" for the region, which will cover areas relating to national security, as well as event-specific plans. Both Dehring and Tetley claimed

ignorance of the details, and referred econoff to John Collymore, the ICC Security Director. Collymore highlighted the problems of geographical coordination, noting that there were nine sovereign nations, with nine attorneys-general, and nine sets of legislation. He also pointed to the lack of high-technology equipment, and weak intelligence sharing among the participating nations. He noted that his team knew of "no specific and credible threats" at this time.

¶13. (SBU) Econoff asked about fan access, and whether he anticipated any unrest from Jamaican fans who were accustomed to simply showing up at Jamaican venues for international matches hosted by the West Indies team. With tickets scarce, and financially beyond the reach of many, some commentators have worried that "the average Jamaican cricket fan" may react harshly to an inability to attend the games. Collymore stated that "it was too early to worry about that" on a policy level, and further suggested that this would be a "local security matter," best addressed by the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF).

Urgency

¶14. (U) Dehring has long been of the view that the governments of the region, and particularly the GOJ, do not have the required urgency about preparations. In a conversation with the Ambassador in December, he opined that the GOJ's successful hosting of the World Junior Track and Field Championships in 2002 engendered overconfidence. He believes that many - regional politicians, Ministers of Tourism, and hotel operators and associations, to name those that he specified - fully comprehend neither the scale and scope of this undertaking, nor their stake in the outcome. He reiterated this in a press release on February 14, in which he stated that "LOCs require increasing support from and access to government officials," and that "the importance of such cooperation cannot be overestimated."

¶15. (SBU) Robert Bryan, Chairman and CEO of Jamaica Cricket 2007 Ltd, Jamaica's LOC, succinctly expressed this fact. "All of the Prime Ministers have been very enthusiastic," he told econoff, "but they have various duties." He framed the problem of urgency in terms of incentives. If all goes wrong, the politicians can blame the ICC. The ICC has the option to sue the WICB for breach of contract provisions, who will turn to Dehring's CWC. And Dehring, naturally, can turn on the LOCs. He noted that the disgruntled fan is most likely to blame the LOC, giving those higher up in the organizational structure little reason to worry. The ICC's Tetley, however, disagreed. Ultimately, he said, a poor World Cup reflects poorly on us all.

Comment

¶16. (SBU) It is easy to be an alarmist with regard to the 2007 Cricket World Cup. In Jamaica, at least, the general public nevertheless appears to be of the opinion that Dehring will, as Lockerbie noted, "pull it off." What is certainly true is that there will also have to be Lockerbie's "smoke and mirrors." With just over a year to go, right now it is difficult to believe that the CWC can address all the issues to make sure that the event will be "done to world-class

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standards," as Dehring hoped in a January press release. Of particular concern is the laissez-faire attitude expressed by some of our interlocutors. Accommodation may not be in any one organization's "portfolio," but the fact remains that a chronic lack of it will engender problems across the event. Likewise, stating that angry fans not being able to get tickets is a "local police matter" is only acceptable if you have a highly capable local police force, something the JCF

is not. Beyond the operational components that have been explored in this cable, septel will report on the growing concerns over the region,s debt burden in the aftermath of the Cup, as well as the intellectual property rights issues that many believe the Jamaican public, at least, does not fully comprehend.

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